



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE
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CHICAGO, IL 60604

NEWS RELEASE

INS Naturalizes 226 new Citizens in Special Ceremony

CHICAGO, IL. – June 28, 2000 – The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in Chicago held a special naturalization ceremony today in celebration of the July 4th holiday. The event was held at the Harold Washington Library's Winter Garden Room and was presided over by Judge Kakourus. A total of 226 people representing 33 countries became United States citizens in this memorable event. Of the 226 new citizens, 35% are from Mexico, 12% from India, and 10% from the Philippines.

"This is a very special ceremony that we hold every year in celebration of the July 4th holiday," said Brian R. Perryman, Chicago District Director of the INS. "These new citizens are very proud and thankful for becoming part of this great country; and this attitude reminds many of us what a privilege it really is to be an American citizen."

Today's keynote speaker, Diego Gutierrez, a member of the Chicago Fire soccer team, was born in Bogotá, Colombia, and was one of the new citizens to be naturalized in this ceremony. Mr. Gutierrez addressed the new citizens by speaking of the many opportunities that this country had provided him and his desire to give something back in return.

The INS has provided immigration benefits, including naturalization of new citizens, to Chicago's immigrants since July 1, 1897. Granting U.S. citizenship to eligible candidates is one of the main priorities for the INS. So far this fiscal year, October 1 to the present, the Chicago District has naturalized approximately 23,000 new citizens.

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